NEAL A. MAXWELL INSTITUTE
FOR RELIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY • PROVO, UTAH

Title The Dead Sea Scrolls and Latter-day Saints: Where Do We Go from Here?

Author(s) Dana M. Pike

Reference *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 2 (2010): 29–48.

ISSN 2151-7800 (print), 2168-3166 (online)

Abstract Many Latter-day Saints are interested in and familiar to some extent with the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), and a few Latter-day Saint scholars have participated in the study and publication of scroll fragments. This essay suggests answers to the question, where can or should Latter-day Saints go from here regarding the Dead Sea Scrolls? Directed to Latter-day Saint readers, the essay assumes there are still important things to learn about and benefit to be gained from further interaction with the DSS. After reviewing the general value of the DSS and Latter-day Saint interest in them, suggestions are provided in five broad categories of consideration, among which are the need to overcome ignorance and misinformation about the scrolls among church members, keeping up-to-date by utilizing current publications on the DSS, and emphasizing and illustrating the value of the DSS for studying the Bible.

The Dead Sea Scrolls and Latter-day Saints: Where Do We Go from Here?

Dana M. Pike

The story of the initial discovery of seven Dead Sea Scrolls in late 1947 in a cave near Qumran, accounts of the further discovery of texts by Bedouin and scholars, and overviews of the challenges with organizing, matching, and publishing the thousands of scroll fragments, have been related numerous times and will not be repeated here.[1] Neither will I cover here the involvement of a few Latter-day Saints as members of the international team of editors of the Dead Sea Scrolls or who in other ways have been connected with the scrolls. The purpose of this essay is to suggest answers to the question, "Where can or should Latter-day Saints go from here regarding the Dead Sea Scrolls?" This paper is thus written for Latter-day Saint readers, from the perspective that there is somewhere to "go" from here. First, however, a few words of introduction are in order.

1. For a fascinating and detailed account of scroll discovery and activity during the years 1947–60, see Weston W. Fields, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Full History*, vol. 1 (Boston: Brill, 2009). For a recent, good-quality overview of the scrolls and their significance, see James C. VanderKam and Peter W. Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002). For a Latter-day Saint approach to the scrolls, see Donald W. Parry and Dana M. Pike, eds., *LDS Perspectives on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1997), and Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Questions and Responses for Latter-Day Saints* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2000).

Studies in the Bible and Antiquity 2 (2010): 29–48.

Anyone with even a passing interest in the Dead Sea Scrolls has hopefully read at least some of them in translation if not in the original (mainly Hebrew). Several reliable translations are available, ranging from the official publication series, *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* (Oxford, 1955–2010), which contains all the biblical and nonbiblical texts (along with transcriptions and technical notes), to more user-friendly compilations of the nonbiblical texts such as Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*.[2] The biblical texts from Qumran are conveniently available in translation in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible* and in *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants*.[3] Furthermore, a database of the Qumran biblical texts will soon appear in the Dead Sea Scrolls Electronic Library (DSSEL), produced by BYU's Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship in conjunction with Brill.[4] This powerful electronic corpus allows for productive research opportunities not easily available to scroll scholars of the previous generation.

There was great excitement about the Dead Sea Scrolls among Bible scholars and many other people in the years following their initial discovery. Based solely on the scrolls found in Cave 1 near Qumran, it was evident that some of these texts were biblical (two copies of the book of Isaiah were discovered in the first cave). Other scrolls contained completely unknown texts that appear to have been unique to the Qumran community, such as the *Community Rule*, the

2. Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin Putnam, 2004). Other recent English translations of the nonbiblical scrolls include Florentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English*, rev. ed. (New York: Brill, 1997), and Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader*, 6 vols. (Boston: Brill, 2004–5).

3. Martin G. Abegg, Peter W. Flint, and Eugene C. Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The Oldest Known Bible* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999); and Eugene C. Ulrich, *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants* (Boston: Brill, 2010).

4. Private communication from Kristian Heal, director of CPART, 22 June 2010. The DSSEL runs on the PC-based WordCruncher search engine. Mac users who wish to run a native Mac application should consider Accordance, which has a variety of biblical texts and numerous collections of related texts, including the Dead Sea Scrolls in Hebrew and English (www.accordancebible.com), but without the associated pictures of Qumran fragments available in the DSSEL.

Thanksgiving Hymns, and the *War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness*. Still other texts discovered in the caves around Qumran had been utilized by many Jews, not just the Qumran community, such as Tobit, *Jubilees*, and *1 Enoch*, although these were never included in the official canon of Jewish scripture. The Dead Sea Scrolls thus represent a variety of Jewish religious texts copied during a period of about three centuries (250 BC–AD 68).

As it turns out, the Dead Sea Scrolls are exceptionally significant for a number of reasons, including:

- They demonstrate the text and transmission history of the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament) during the last two centuries BC and first century AD (the "turn of the era"). The scrolls illustrate that in Jesus's time there was not just one authorized version of any book of the Hebrew Bible, but that there were slightly to moderately differing Hebrew texts of the same biblical books concurrently used by Jews in Palestine (greater standardization of biblical texts did not occur until several decades after the Roman destruction of the Jerusalem temple in AD 70).
- They further illustrate the existence of "Judaisms" at the turn of the era: Jewish religion was not a universal, monolithic form of belief and practice, nor were the differences restricted to the Pharisees and Sadducees emphasized in the New Testament. The Dead Sea Scrolls help demonstrate that the Jewish religious landscape of the time was much more fascinating and diverse (especially in relation to purity and temple matters) than previously supposed, as they expand our view of the broader religious and cultural background out of which Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism "developed" in the first and second centuries AD.
- They provide contemporary evidence for the broad corpus of Jewish religious texts that are not part of the biblical canon, but were important to Jews of Jesus's day for doctrine, devotion, exhortation, and entertainment.

- They significantly increase our understanding of the Hebrew and Aramaic languages at the turn of the era.
- And they provide the best evidence of scribal practices and scroll-making procedures from that time period.

Although all these contributions can be of interest and value to Latter-day Saints, none of them is Restoration-specific. And given the reality that many Saints do not spend much time studying large portions of the Old Testament and are relatively unfamiliar with certain portions of the New Testament,[5] preaching the values of the Dead Sea Scrolls to Latter-day Saints in general must rank lower than emphasizing the value of greater scripture literacy.

The Place of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Restoration Era

Hugh Nibley was the first Latter-day Saint scholar to publish about the Dead Sea Scrolls and their value for better understanding the background of scripture. Only a relatively few academically trained Latter-day Saint scholars have published on the Dead Sea Scrolls in the past two decades.[6]

Some Latter-day Saints have a general interest in the Dead Sea Scrolls because they connect them with prophecies such as Psalm 85:11, "Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven," and Moses 7:62, "And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men." While I do not believe these scripture passages specifically foretell the discovery and publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls, I do think the scrolls are an important part of the larger restoration of knowledge about the Bible and the ancient world of the Bible that the Lord has brought about in connection with the Restoration. As I have written elsewhere,

5. This is my opinion, based on my personal experience. I have not conducted, nor have I seen, any type of methodologically sound survey regarding this claim.

6. See Daniel B. McKinlay and Steven W. Booras, "The Dead Sea Scrolls: Select Publications by Latter-day Saint Scholars," in this issue, pp. 105–16, as well as Hugh Nibley, "From the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS)," also in this issue, pp. 83–104.

> Given the accumulation of discoveries and decipherments during the past two centuries, it is easy to forget that before 1800 very little was known about the ancient world of the Bible. The avalanche of historical and linguistic knowledge relating to that ancient world that began in the early 1800s, *at the same time* the Lord was restoring doctrine and authority to the earth through Joseph Smith, is part of the Lord's work in "the fulness of times" to "gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (D&C 27:13).[7]

From the discoveries of the early and mid-nineteenth century to such landmark twentieth-century discoveries as the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Lord seems to be providing an ever-increasing amount of knowledge about the world in which ancient Saints lived and a backdrop against which to understand gospel truths as revealed in past dispensations as well as in this current one.

Having personally worked with and published some of the thousands of small Dead Sea Scroll fragments, I have a professional interest in both these texts and the contribution they can continue to make to the academic study of the Bible and Judaism at the beginning of the Christian era, as well as the value they can have for interested believers in the Restoration. This essay is *my* attempt to answer the question, "Where can or should Latter-day Saints go from here regarding the Dead Sea Scrolls?," in which I suggest how and why I think the scrolls have value for Latter-day Saints and what can be done to further maximize the use of the scrolls by Latter-day Saints. Rather than dividing my points into categories addressed to academics and church members in general, I provide here a single list of five broad points for consideration:

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7. Dana M. Pike, "Recovering the World of the Bible," in *Prelude to the Restoration: From Apostasy to the Restored Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2004), 159–60, emphasis in original. I have also commented on this topic in Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Dana M. Pike, and David Rolph Seely, *Jehovah and the World of the Old Testament* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2009), 380–83.

1. Countering Ongoing Ignorance and Misinformation about the Dead Sea Scrolls

My own experience affirms that many Latter-day Saints have heard something about the Dead Sea Scrolls but in reality know little *accurate* information about them. Unfortunately, some people's zeal to share what they find interesting about the scrolls outpaces the accuracy of their fireside presentations. This can be attributed to, among other things, a lack of personal familiarity with the content of the scrolls themselves, the use of outdated secondary sources, a lack of careful assessment of the claims in secondary source materials of any date (including much of what circulates on the Internet), and mixing of information about the Qumran texts with other ancient but quite different manuscripts (such as those discovered at Nag Hammadi, Egypt).

Knowing that the Qumran community was not a divinely authorized Restoration group, but rather a protesting and reforming movement within Jewish religion in the last century BC and the first century AD, Latter-day Saints should not expect to find a complete and accurate catalog of gospel truths preserved in the scrolls.[8] However, it is true that beyond the biblical texts there are some interesting, but generally superficial similarities between passages in the sectarian Dead Sea Scrolls—those unique to the Qumran community—and Latter-day Saint organization and belief. For example, the *Community Rule* (1QS III, 16–25) claims that God created the Prince of Lights and the Angel of Darkness, who influence people on earth to follow "truth" or "deceit." This may seem to Latter-day Saints like the aftermath of the so-called war in heaven. However, the Qumran texts never mention a "war" in heaven, nor a loss of status for the Angel of Darkness (in contrast to Satan being cast out of heaven), and they clearly include the false doctrine that God predestined, not just foreordained, people's

8. This view has been expressed numerous times, but many Latter-day Saints do not seem to have grasped it. See recently Andrew C. Skinner's remark that the Qumran community is *not* a previously "unknown group of pre-Christian 'Latter-day Saints' living down by the Dead Sea in the Holy Land," in "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Latter-day Truth," *Ensign*, February 2006, 44.

mortal lives and their fate in the life to come (as well as other doctrines not in harmony with Restoration belief).[9] Beyond what doctrine is already preserved in the Old Testament, the nonbiblical scrolls preserve, at best, what I call "corrupted echoes" of truth—original truths not completely understood or preserved by the Qumran community that come to us in vaguely familiar but corrupted condition.[10]

I here reaffirm my statement above. Emphasizing scripture study must take precedence over trumpeting scroll study. However, these are not mutually exclusive. And the more Latter-day Saints understand and properly utilize the Dead Sea Scrolls, along with other ancient Near Eastern texts, the more fully they will appreciate the richness of the Old and New Testaments *in their own contexts*.

A second example of an oft-cited superficial similarity involves the passage prescribing part of the governing structure of the Qumran community: "in the Council of the Community there shall be twelve men and three priests who are blameless in all that has been revealed from all the Law" (1QS VIII, 1–2; my translation). This leads to a common assumption that the leadership of the community included three priests and twelve other men. However, these priests were Aaronic priests and the "twelve men" were Israelite males with no priesthood at all. Given the important role of priesthood leadership, priesthood keys (lacking at Qumran), and the significance of the numbers three and twelve in the Old Testament (twelve Israelite tribes is probably the basis for there being twelve apostles), it is hard for me to see how this passage provides specific support for the Restoration, as some Latter-day Saints have implied.[11] Furthermore,

9. For a summary discussion of this and related passages, see, for example, Dana M. Pike, "Is the Plan of Salvation Attested in the Dead Sea Scrolls?," in *LDS Perspectives on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 76–81. In addition to the Qumran community's belief in predestination, another false doctrine in the Dead Sea Scrolls is their apparent belief in the coming of two messiahs, a priestly one and a royal one, whereas Latter-day Saints and other Christians would see these two authoritative roles combined in Jesus.

10. This phrase was first used in Pike, "Is the Plan of Salvation Attested in the Dead Sea Scrolls?," 90.

11. See, for example, Keith Terry and Stephen Biddulph, *Dead Sea Scrolls and the Mormon Connection* (n.p.: Maasai, 1996), 112–13; reviewed by Dana M. Pike in *FARMS Review of Books* 9/2 (1997): 88–98.

it is not even clear from the New Testament that the church in the first century AD had a separate three-member Quorum of the First Presidency in addition to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, as the Restored church does. Finally, there is debate among scroll scholars over the interpretation of this passage (1QS VIII, 1–2), with some rejecting the traditional view that this prescribes the form of the Qumran community's leadership.[12]

Although the Qumran texts occasionally hint at something that is not well preserved in the Old Testament but that is believed by Latter-day Saints, they do not contain complete and unadulterated doctrinal truths other than what is already preserved in the Bible—there are *no new* whole doctrines clearly preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls that only Latter-day Saints recognize. Furthermore, the Dead Sea Scrolls make no mention of several important doctrines such as the Fall, an infinite atonement by a Redeemer, and saving ordinances that require the holy Melchizedek Priesthood. Thus, in contrast to the Book of Mormon, the Dead Sea Scrolls do *not* "bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead," and thus do not qualify as a specific fulfillment of the prophecy that "truth will I [the Lord] send forth out of the earth" (Moses 7:62).

Therefore, one important and absolute necessity is to continue the effort to educate interested Latter-day Saints about what the scrolls are, what they say, and what they do not say. I trust a sustained effort will help eliminate from among most Latter-day Saints such totally false claims as "the Sacrament prayers are contained in the Dead Sea Scrolls" and "the temple endowment and marriage sealing ceremony are preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls."[13] It is most important for Latter-day Saints to appreciate that the value of the scrolls and scroll

12. For a recent alternative approach, see John J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 69–72.

13. I have on file the transcript of a woefully inaccurate Latter-day Saint fireside given in California in the late 1990s that includes these and similarly false statements. Sadly, I have heard versions of these and related claims reported many times to me by colleagues and students. For a specific published example, see Richard Neitzel Holzapfel in "The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Roundtable Discussion Celebrating the Sixtieth Anniversary of Their Discovery, Part 2," *Religious Educator* 9/2 (2008): 93–94.

fragments is not that they contain seemingly sensational proof texts of the Restoration, for they do not,[14] but rather that they include the oldest surviving copies of biblical texts and they illustrate the richness and variety of Jewish religious writings at the beginning of the Christian era.

This need for accurate information is especially true among church missionaries and teachers, including seminary and institute teachers, so as to minimize the misinformation that is so often spread, unintentionally to be sure, about the Dead Sea Scrolls. I commend organizations such as the Maxwell Institute and the Religious Studies Center, both housed at Brigham Young University in Provo, for providing quality resources (such as this issue of *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity*) for Latter-day Saints on the Dead Sea Scrolls and other relevant ancient texts, and hope they will continue to do so. Additionally, the resources cited in the footnotes to this article are a good place to begin for those who are interested in learning more. Perhaps the editors of the *Ensign* and *Liahona* would consider periodically publishing more often than they have in the past twenty-five years short articles on such texts as the Dead Sea Scrolls and ancient Israelite inscriptions, particularly ones that illustrate the contribution of such texts to a better understanding of our canonical scriptures.[15] It seems to me that the effort to educate Latter-day Saints about the scrolls will always be more successful when it is not just about the scrolls themselves (important as this can be), but rather about the value they can have in helping us better grasp and appreciate our own scriptures.

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14. See recently on this topic the comments of Seely, Parry, and Pike in "A Roundtable Discussion, Part 2," 84–87. It is important to note that the Maxwell Institute and its previous iterations, FARMS and ISPART, have sponsored a number of informed firesides over the years about the Dead Sea Scrolls, as well as a conference and related publications (see McKinlay and Booras, "Publications by Latter-day Saint Scholars," in this issue, 105–16). And recently BYU's Religious Studies Center published Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Donald W. Parry, Dana M. Pike, and David Rolph Seely, "The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Roundtable Discussion Celebrating the Sixtieth Anniversary of Their Discovery, Part 1," *Religious Educator* 8/3 (2007): 127–46, and Holzapfel, Parry, Pike, and Seely, "A Roundtable Discussion, Part 2," 83–97.

15. See most recently, Skinner, "Dead Sea Scrolls and Latter-day Truth," 44–49.

2. Keeping Up-to-Date

In spite of the important efforts of Hugh Nibley to publicize the Dead Sea Scrolls among Latter-day Saints, if Latter-day Saints want to be accurately and more fully informed, it is essential to move beyond *just* or *primarily* utilizing Nibley's publications as a resource. Dr. Nibley's writings on the Dead Sea Scrolls were mainly produced in the 1950s and 1960s, decades before much of the scroll material was published and accessible.[16] Although Nibley brought a Restoration perspective to his studies and was correct about some things regarding the scrolls, the limitations of working with incomplete data hindered his efforts, and those of every other scholar of that period, at fully and accurately grasping the content and contribution of the scrolls. As is inevitable in scholarship, aspects of Nibley's publications on the Dead Sea Scrolls are dated, as are other authors' books and articles produced on the scrolls prior to 1995.

There are now reliable, more up-to-date publications by Latter-day Saint and non–Latter-day Saint scholars that must be accessed by Latter-day Saints who desire to be well-versed on the Dead Sea Scrolls. And there will continue to be further advances made in understanding the Qumran community, their beliefs, and their historical situation. Research on Qumran and the scrolls is ongoing, not static. Those who wish to keep current must make the investment of not only studying the primary texts—the scrolls and fragments themselves (at least in translation)—but new developments as they are published by responsible scholars. As with the need for Latter-day Saints to access accurate information on the Dead Sea Scrolls, so likewise there is the need to access up-to-date information from reliable and legitimate sources.

3. The Larger Context of Religious Writings

Without replacing or superseding the canonical scriptures, religious writings such as the nonbiblical Qumran texts can certainly be

16. For a list of Nibley's publications relating to the Dead Sea Scrolls, see the composite bibliography of Latter-day Saint publications in McKinlay and Booras, "Publications by Latter-day Saint Scholars," in this issue, 107–8.

of value to Latter-day Saints. Such texts can help us more fully appreciate concepts such as covenant, the influence of the Holy Spirit, the challenge of individual spirituality in a wicked world, and "likening" the scriptures to present-day circumstances, as we see how others have understood and grappled with such important religious matters. In reality, this is not much different from other types of studies in which any student of the scriptures can engage, whether examining the New Testament apocrypha, the Jewish Mishnah and related writings, the Qurʾan, the writings of Martin Luther or John Milton, or the Dead Sea Scrolls.

There are broad perspectives as well as specific insights to be gained when we study other texts connected to and growing out of the biblical tradition. I think it is possible to generalize on the principle the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith in regard to his question about the Old Testament Apocrypha when he was engaged in his inspired revision of the Bible: "There are many things contained therein that are true, . . . [and] There are many things contained therein that are not true, . . . Therefore, whoso readeth it, let him understand, for the Spirit manifesteth truth; And whoso is enlightened by the Spirit shall obtain benefit therefrom; and whoso receiveth not by the Spirit, cannot be benefited" (D&C 91:1–6).

The Lord also counseled Joseph Smith and other Saints to "study and learn, and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people" (D&C 90:15) and to "obtain a knowledge of history, and of countries, and of kingdoms, of laws of God and man, and all this for the salvation of Zion" (D&C 93:53; see also 88:77–80). Increasing one's knowledge about the Dead Sea Scrolls and the history of the Jewish Second Temple period, for example, fits wonderfully well into the Lord's "general education" perspective on learning about history, cultures, and peoples, both past and present.

While there are certainly priorities regarding various kinds of truth and knowledge, Latter-day Saints who focus *only* on doctrine in their scripture study seem to be out of step with the just-cited instruction in latter-day revelation. Doctrine is unquestionably most important, but much of Latter-day Saint scripture contains doctrine couched

in narrative that always includes cultural and other contextual background information. Knowing even a little bit of accurate information about these matters dramatically improves scriptural understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment.[17]

Returning to our focus on the Dead Sea Scrolls, as David Rolph Seely recently stated,

> I think we [Latter-day Saints] should study the [nonbiblical] Dead Sea Scrolls just like we study [religious texts from] other religions that are not our own. If we go to them for added perspective and appreciation for the truth that we already have, we will gain greater insights. . . . But if we go to the scrolls to prove the Church is true, we won't be satisfied. . . . We need to remember that the scroll writers were people who found themselves in a crisis, with apostasy all around them. They sought a meaningful relationship with God, and they found something. What they found was not the fulness of the gospel, yet it is still worth studying. . . . But if we want to look just for parallels, then we would be better off just reading the scriptures.[18]

4. Further Academic Contributions by Latter-day Saint Scholars

As Professor Frank Cross observed over fifty years ago, "When the majority of these documents from the wilderness of the Dead Sea are published the main labors of research will not be done. Scholars will be occupied for decades in the tedious studies required to assimilate adequately the knowledge available in these new sources, and to relate this learning to biblical and ancillary disciplines."[19] Since the

17. Two more modern examples further help to illustrate this point: (1) Joseph Smith did not just provide us with a doctrinal exposition after seeing the Father and the Son in his "first vision," but rather couched this revelation in the context of his life experiences so we could more fully appreciate the uniqueness of what he saw and the reaction he experienced as he shared this new understanding; (2) the church's scripture committee produced short historical sketches, printed in italics before each revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants, to provide historical background for each revelation.

18. Seely, in "A Roundtable Discussion, Part 2," 89.

19. Frank Moore Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, 3rd ed. (1st ed., 1958; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 20.

available Dead Sea Scrolls have now all been officially published, this type of thorough investigative work of which Cross spoke continues and will continue for a long time to come.[20]

Latter-day Saint scholars can and will continue to contribute to scholarship on the Dead Sea Scrolls. There is no reason that interested and well-trained Latter-day Saint scholars cannot make important contributions to better understanding such issues as (1) the larger Jewish context of John the Baptist's and Jesus's ministries; (2) the generally accepted connection between Qumran (the site) and the scrolls; (3) the seemingly Essene nature of the Qumran community and the question of the community's relationship to Essenes living elsewhere throughout Palestine; (4) the specific question of Qumran's status—the sole center or hub of sectarian activity or merely one of several such centers?[21]—as well as the proposed relationship between the Qumran community and so-called Enochic Judaism;[22] (5) the matter of which scrolls were copied at Qumran and which ones were brought there, from where, when, and why; (6) the ongoing questions about the nature and content of a canon of scripture in the Qumran community; and (7) the nature of messianic conceptions among Jesus's followers and the Qumran community, including the significance of such scroll fragments as 4Q246 (the so-called Son of God text) and 4Q521 (Messianic Apocalypse).[23]

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20. It has long been claimed that there are some scroll fragments not available to scholars to publish. For example, Fields, *Dead Sea Scrolls: A Full History*, 157, claims that "there are as many as 16 Hebrew biblical fragments and one fragment of Enoch languishing in a vault in Switzerland, 140 Greek fragments in Jerusalem, and a large fragment of Genesis elsewhere, for whose purchase I have not been able to get one penny despite four years of work, scores of letters and meetings, and hundreds of dollars' worth of phone calls."

21. This latter position is favored by Collins in his recent *Beyond the Qumran Community*, 10.

22. Gabriele Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), first postulated that the Qumran community was a "radical, dissident" offshoot from the "mainstream" Essene movement, which he labels Enochic Judaism (p. 16).

23. For a recent review of messianic texts in the Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and related texts, see Adela Yarbro Collins and John J. Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008); see also John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star:*

There are still many important insights to be gained and contributions to be made in Qumran and Dead Sea Scroll studies, as well as in the greater context of late Second Temple Judaism. The official publication of all the known Dead Sea Scroll fragments allows scholars to more confidently review their methodology and undertake various types of intertextual and interdisciplinary studies of the scrolls and the Qumran community.[24] To fully participate in such work requires a person's commitment of energy, time, and money to receive quality academic training in a recognized graduate program. I trust that Latter-day Saints who currently are graduate students or will be in the future will make important contributions to the academic study of the scrolls and will thus be in a good position to help further inform other Latter-day Saints who are interested in Qumran and the scrolls.

5. Improved Readings of Biblical Texts

Joseph Smith's statement that Latter-day Saints "believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly" (Article of Faith 8) must of necessity include the factor of its accurate *transmission*, not just the accurate translation or rendition of it from an ancient language to a modern one. To this end the church included notes in the 1979 Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Old Testament that provide more accurate or more modern renditions of over five hundred passages. These are introduced with the abbreviation "HEB." These four examples provide an illustration of this practice: Genesis 1:1, note c; 2:2, note b; Exodus 2:3, note a; and 2:25, note a. Occasionally, the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Old Testament provides a citation to a textual reading preserved in the Septuagint (often abbreviated LXX), the translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek produced by Jews living in Alexandria, Egypt, in the third and second centuries BC. Examples of

The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature (New York: Doubleday, 1995).

24. See, for example, the recent publication by Maxine L. Grossman, ed., *Rediscovering the Dead Sea Scrolls: An Assessment of Old and New Approaches and Methods* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010).

the sixteen occurrences of "Septuagint" in the footnotes of the Latter-day Saint edition of the KJV Old Testament include Genesis 48:14, note b, and 1 Kings 11:32, note a.

Given this effort by the church's scripture committee to help readers more clearly and accurately understand the text of the KJV, I wonder if the day will come when such helpful footnotes will also include "DSS" or "QUM" or "HEB DSS," followed by a reading from one of the biblical texts from the Qumran caves that seems to provide a more accurate rendition of scripture.[25] Such an enterprise is somewhat subjective (what are the most important variant readings?) and takes time and money the church may be unwilling to dedicate to the Bible footnotes at this time. Either way, Latter-day Saint scholars can help by highlighting in their own writings some of the Old Testament passages that are better understood with help from the biblical texts belonging to the Dead Sea Scrolls.

I hasten to point out that none of the Qumran copies of biblical texts include any startling insights or new doctrines compared to what is preserved in our canonical Bible. Neither Zenos nor Neum, for example, is mentioned in the Dead Sea Scrolls, nor are important lost passages of Isaiah found.[26] The content damage that occurred to books of the Old Testament had primarily already taken place by the first century BC, and the writings of earlier prophets such as Zenos had apparently disappeared; at any rate they are nowhere to be found among the religious texts known as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

25. See Donald W. Parry, "The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible," in this issue, pp. 1–27.

26. Interestingly, modern translations of the book of Isaiah now routinely follow 1QIsa[a] and other Qumran texts for several passages in which the Hebrew Masoretic Text is deemed problematic. Examples include Isaiah 14:4 and 49:12, 24. The challenge for Latter-day Saints in such cases as those just cited is that the Book of Mormon (2 Nephi 24:4 and 1 Nephi 21:12, 24, respectively, for the examples given) follows the KJV readings in these passages. The KJV utilized the Hebrew Masoretic Text, the readings of which recent translators have rejected in certain, problematic instances. This can generate a number of questions for Latter-day Saints, who are prone to accept the passages of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon as accurately reflecting the text of Isaiah. For examples of instances in which readings in 1QIsa[a] agree with the Book of Mormon against the KJV, see Parry and Ricks, *Questions and Responses*, 44–46.

Centuries before the Qumran community existed, in Jeremiah and Lehi's day (the late 600s BC), Jeremiah accused some scribes of altering the text of scripture: "How can you say, 'We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us,' when, in fact, the false pen of the scribes has made it into a lie?" (Jeremiah 8:8 NRSV).[27] It seems that the prophecy in 1 Nephi 13:23–29 refers primarily to the New Testament and secondarily to *further* corruption of the books of the Hebrew Bible, which occurred after the textual corruptions and the removal of the writings of specific prophets (like Zenos) that had taken place in the centuries *prior* to Jesus's mortal ministry. Most of the hundreds of different textual readings contained in the biblical texts from Qumran preserve relatively minor variants.

Having said this, there are a number of Old Testament passages that can be more fully or accurately understood with the aid of the biblical Qumran scrolls and fragments, which are the oldest surviving copies of biblical texts.[28] Three examples must suffice here. Although examples can be found throughout the Old Testament, the first two come from 1 Samuel. As has been stated elsewhere,

> Scholars have long recognized that the book of Samuel in the traditional Hebrew Bible—the Masoretic Text—contains a number of mistakes and other textual challenges. Fragments of four copies of Samuel were discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls. One of these—4QSam[a], copied about 50 BC—has contributed significantly to better understanding the textual history of the book of Samuel. While 4QSam[a] often agrees with the Masoretic Text, it also preserves readings that

27. While this is the most common translation of this challenging verse, some modern versions (such as that of the New Jewish Publication Society) render it somewhat differently. The NRSV translation is cited here because the sense of the verse is clearer than in the KJV.

28. Interested readers can pursue further examples in such publications as Abegg, Flint, and Ulrich, *Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, and Harold Scanlin, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Modern Translations of the Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993). Scanlin's work is cited by Donald W. Parry in "The Contribution of the Dead Sea Scrolls to Biblical Understanding," in *LDS Perspectives on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 64–65, and by Ricks and Parry, *Questions and Responses*, 47–48.

> agree with the Greek Septuagint against the Masoretic Text and sometimes preserves independent readings not attested elsewhere. Such textual variants, found in 4QSam[a] and other biblical manuscripts from Qumran, highlight the status of the biblical text at the turn of the era. They further illustrate that readings in the Septuagint that differ from the Masoretic Text were often based on Hebrew manuscripts that likewise differed from proto-Masoretic Text manuscripts.[29]

The first example is 1 Samuel 1:22. The KJV, following the Masoretic Text, presents Hannah saying about her young son Samuel: "I will bring him [to Shiloh], that he may appear before the Lord, and there abide for ever." However, the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), for example, reads: "I will bring him, that he may appear in the presence of the Lord, and remain there for ever; I will offer him as a nazirite for all time." The extra wording in the NRSV at the end of the verse, containing Hannah's explicit mention that she would offer Samuel as a Nazirite, is based on the occurrence of this phrase in Hebrew in 4QSam[a]; the NRSV translation committee accepted it as a legitimate textual reading that had been lost from the traditional Hebrew Bible.[30]

The second example is 1 Samuel 10:27–11:1. Again, the KJV is based on the traditional Masoretic Text, in which there is a distinct lack of transition between the narrative at the end of 1 Samuel 10 and the beginning of 1 Samuel 11. However, 4QSam[a] contains a few sentences here about the mutilation of the right eyes of many Israelites by Nahash, king of the Ammonites, which help readers make better sense of the episode. Again, the NRSV and other recent translations have incorporated this text from a scroll into their Old Testament.[31]

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29. Holzapfel, Pike, and Seely, *Jehovah and the World of the Old Testament*, 199.

30. See Abegg, Flint, and Ulrich, *Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, 215.

31. See Abegg, Flint, and Ulrich, *Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, 224–25; and Holzapfel, Pike, and Seely, *Jehovah and the World of the Old Testament*, 199. See this latter citation also for a summary of the textual differences regarding the height of Goliath, the Philistine warrior killed by David.

The final example is Deuteronomy 32:43, the last verse of the so-called Song of Moses, a poetic rendition of praise for Jehovah and a warning of the consequences the Israelites would receive if they broke their covenant with him. The differences between the KJV translation, which accurately renders the traditional received Hebrew text, and the NRSV, based upon 4QDeut[q], which itself exhibits similarities with the Septuagint text of this verse, are underlined:

> KJV: Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.
>
> NRSV: Praise, O <u>heavens</u>, his people, <u>worship him</u>, <u>all you gods</u>! For he will avenge the blood of his <u>children</u>, and take vengeance on his adversaries; <u>he will repay those who hate him</u>, and <u>cleanse</u> the <u>land for his people</u>.[32]

Not surprisingly, there are also textual readings in some of the Qumran biblical scrolls that appear to be incorrect. For example, 1QIsa[b] does not contain the end of Isaiah 60:19 and the beginning of verse 20 as found in 1QIsa[a] and in the traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text. It appears that the scribe who copied this scroll inadvertently skipped from a phrase in verse 19 to the same phrase in verse 20, omitting the words in between. No one argues that this shorter reading in 1QIsa[b] is correct or preferable, but rather that it is a mistake. This reminds us that there are corruptions in and challenges with the biblical texts from Qumran, even though they are the earliest exemplars that we have, just as there are in all other ancient biblical manuscripts.

Helping Latter-day Saints better understand the nature and value of the *biblical* texts found at Qumran and elsewhere in the Judean desert is a productive enterprise. It deserves further, ongoing attention from Latter-day Saints scholars of the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls.[33]

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32. See Abegg, Flint, and Ulrich, *Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, 192–93.

33. BYU professors David Rolph Seely, Donald W. Parry, and myself, as well as others, have emphasized this point on various occasions over several years, but the need to reemphasize it continues. Similarly, there are nonbiblical Dead Sea Scrolls passages that

Conclusion

The Dead Sea Scrolls provide a wonderful window onto the history of the biblical text and the past convictions of some Second Temple period Jews. Understandably, they also encourage Latter-day Saints to look forward to the time when the Lord will provide additional scripture to his restored church. Elder Dallin H. Oaks emphasized this latter point in general conference a few years ago when he observed,

> We conclude from this [review of prophecies about the future coming forth of more scripture, as found in 1 Nephi 13:38–39 and 2 Nephi 29:8, 11–13] that the Lord will eventually cause the inspired teachings He has given to His children in various nations to be brought forth for the benefit of all people. This will include accounts of the visit of the resurrected Lord to what we call the lost tribes of Israel and His revelations to all the seed of Abraham. The finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls shows one way this can occur.[34]

His statement seems to indicate Elder Oaks considers it feasible that some portion of future, additional scripture will be made known via the human discovery of ancient manuscripts, that they will not just be delivered by an angel from the Lord to the president of the church. I do *not* consider Elder Oaks's statement to indicate he considers the nonbiblical texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls to be scripture in their own right, on a par with the contents of the Latter-day Saint canon. His deliberate choice of words—"the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls"—emphasizes *one manner* in which future scripture *may* be found. Elder Oaks did not claim the nonbiblical Dead Sea Scrolls should be viewed by Latter-day Saints as legitimate scripture.[35]

The Dead Sea Scrolls continue to fascinate and educate many people. I hope that well-prepared Latter-day Saint scholars will continue

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help illuminate certain New Testament texts. Helping Latter-day Saints better appreciate and understand these connections is also valuable. See in this issue, for example, Andrew C. Skinner, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the World of Jesus," 49–82.

34. Dallin H. Oaks, "All Men Everywhere," *Ensign*, May 2006, 80.

35. I emphasize here that this is *my* understanding of Elder Oaks's comment. I have not consulted him on this matter to gain further clarification.

to engage in scrolls research and to provide an ever-increasing collection of accessible materials about the scrolls for a Latter-day Saint audience. And I hope that interested Latter-day Saints will take the initiative to more fully understand these miraculously preserved ancient texts, to learn about their limitations, and to take greater advantage of what they do have to offer the curious and careful student of the Bible and antiquity.

Dana M. Pike is professor of ancient scripture and director of Ancient Near Eastern Studies at Brigham Young University.